ASSESSING AND MAXIMIZING YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS (AMP) TOOL

The AMP Tool is a 4-step process for assessing inter-organizational partnerships. It is customizable based on an organization's goals and objectives.

PURPOSE
- Provide tools for and an opportunity to practice using social networks concepts to assess organizational partnerships.
- Support assessment of the strength, diversity, impact, and other aspects of organizational partnerships.
- Provide information about current partnerships that can be reported out to funders, collaborators, and other partners.
- Provide a strategic planning tool that organizations can use to identify, develop, and pursue specific actions related to partnerships that are consistent with internal goals and objectives.
- Provide a resource which emphasizes the efficiency, strategy, and depth of partnerships rather than just the breadth and quality of partnerships.

TIPS ON HOW TO USE THE AMP TOOL

- Use the AMP Tool with a group from your organization or program. You may find the tool to be most informative when the persons working on it represent diverse parts of your organization or program.
- The AMP Tool is designed to be used on an ongoing and continuous basis. Each time your organization or program identifies a new goal or objective is an opportunity to use the AMP Tool.
- Make sure to set aside sufficient time to complete each step of the AMP Tool. Depending on your organization, you may find that it makes sense to complete each of the four steps over four separate meetings, or you may find it more efficient to spend several hours completing the tool in its entirety.
- Customize the AMP Tool to fit your organization's needs. If certain parts of the tool are not a fit with your needs, feel free to revise it.

Although it may seem like some work at the outset, remember that the AMP Tool will ultimately provide new perspectives into how to develop stronger, more efficient partnerships that are consistent with your organization's specific goals and objectives.

ASSESSING AND MAXIMIZING YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS (AMP) TOOL
Instructions (page 1)

STEP 1: DEFINE GOAL / OBJECTIVE
Identify an organizational goal you want to achieve using partnerships and write it in the space provided on the AMP Tool.

STEP 2: CREATE A PARTNERSHIP SNAPSHOT

A. Thinking about your goal / objective, use the AMP Tool to list all of your current partners that could help you reach this goal under the "Current Partners" column. Depending on your organization and your identified goal / objective, you may not need to use all of the rows provided <u>or</u> you may need to add additional rows.

Current Partner: An organization, program, or individual that your organization has had experience working with in relation to some aspect of your specified goal / objective.

B. Review the partnership benefits that are provided in each of the columns. If there are additional benefits you want to assess, add them to the "Other Benefits" columns. Also, if any of the provided benefits do not fit with your goal / objective, disregard or change these. Feel free to customize the partnership benefits listed in each column so that they fit with your specified goal / objective.

Partnership Benefit: A function, activity, or outcome that is the result of collaboration between a partner and your organization.

C. For each current partner, identify what benefits you are currently or could potentially receive based on the benefits listed in each of the columns. Identify benefits you are currently able to receive from the partnership with a check mark. If you are not currently receiving a benefit from a partner, but there is potential opportunity to gain this benefit from the partner, note this with a star.

D. For each partner, note in the last column the type of organization the partner falls under. The categories you use to define the type of organization will depend on your specific goal / objective. Some examples of how you might categorize organizations are as follows:

- To assess diversity by organization type: *community-based organizations, funders, academic partners, etc.*
- To assess by organizational focus areas: *health care organization, education organization, legal advocacy organization, etc.*
- To assess by the level of operation: *local, state, federal, etc.*

ASSESSING AND MAXIMIZING YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS (AMP) TOOL
Instructions (page 2)

STEP 3: ANALYZE YOUR PARTNERSHIP SNAPSHOT
Take a look at your partnership snapshot and note patterns that may indicate strengths as well as any gaps or areas for improvement.

A. **Overall Snapshot:** You can scan across the rows and columns to determine where you have strengths and/or gaps in the benefits you need to reach your goal.

B. **Columns:** You can scan down each column to assess your organization's ability to gain needed benefits from your current partners.

Examples: If there is a column that includes a check mark(s) (i.e., a current benefit of a partnership), it may be useful to focus on strategies to continue to support/maintain partnerships that provide this benefit. If there is a column that contains a star(s) (i.e., a potential benefit of a partnership), your action plan may focus on furthering these opportunities. If a column does not contain a mark of any kind, you may want to brainstorm with colleagues to think about new partners that could provide this benefit for your organization.

C. **Rows:** Assessment of rows can help you quantify what a given partner brings to the table for your identified goal.

Examples: If a row contains a large number of checks, you may want to ensure that you direct attention and energy to maintaining and supporting that connection as it is useful. Alternatively, you may find that a row has many stars and points to a relationship that deserves development so that you can realize additional benefits. Last, you may find that some rows are blank. This may indicate that the partnership does not support this particular goal or may be an indication that the partnership is not as strong or as active as you would like.

D. You can also assess your partnerships according to the following criteria:
   - Diversity of partners, in terms of level of expertise with a given subject or influence and reach in the community.
   - How does communication generally flow between your organization and partner agencies? Is communication generally one-way or two-way? How might this impact the benefits you gain from the partnership?

Use the indicated space on the AMP Tool for notes on your snapshot analysis.

STEP 4: DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS GAPS AND STRENGTHEN IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIPS
Based on your snapshot analysis, develop 3-5 action items that will help you maximize the benefits of your partnerships.

Below you will find a copy of the tool as well as a pre-filled example with notes.

ASSESSING AND MAXIMIZING YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS (AMP) TOOL
Tool (page 1)

STEP 1: DEFINE GOAL / OBJECTIVE

_____
_____
_____

STEP 2: CREATE A PARTNERSHIP SNAPSHOT

	Partnership Benefits									
Current Partners	*Share funding, materials, space, staff, etc.*	*Share access to people you want to reach*	*Share info. re: programs or services*	*Share info re: funding*	*Collaborate for funding*	*Help promote events*	*Provide connections to other organizations*	*Other Benefit: _____ _____*	*Other Benefit: _____ _____*	***Type of Organization***
Name: _____										
Name: _____										
Name: _____										
Name: _____										
Name: _____										
Name: _____										
Name: _____										
Name: _____										

Key: ☑ = **current partnership benefit**
☆ = **potential partnership benefit**

ASSESSING AND MAXIMIZING YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS (AMP) TOOL
Tool (page 2)

STEP 3: ANALYZE YOUR PARTNERSHIP SNAPSHOT
Analysis Notes:

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_____
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_____
_____
_____

STEP 4: DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS GAPS AND STRENGTHEN IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIPS
Action Plan:

1. _____
   _____
   _____

2. _____
   _____
   _____

3. _____
   _____
   _____

4. _____
   _____
   _____

5. _____
   _____
   _____

ASSESSING AND MAXIMIZING YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS (AMP) TOOL
Example (page 1)

STEP 1: DEFINE GOAL / OBJECTIVE
Enhance nutrition services for homeless mothers and children in the Greater Boston area.

Step 3A: Overall snapshot shows a fair amount of current partnership benefits, many opportunities for growth, and some gaps related to achieving the specified goal.

Step 3B: Current partnerships seem to be strongly fulfilling this benefit.

Step 3B: Appears to be a benefit area with no current support from partners but significant potential. How might potential efforts be supported?

Step 3B: No partners were identified as currently or potentially providing this benefit. Is this benefit important to the goal? If 'yes', can it be achieved through current partners? Or should new partners be identified who can provide this benefit?

Step 3D: It appears that there is some diversity related to partner organizations' focus areas. Is this the level of diversity needed to achieve the goal? Who is missing? Is there overlap or duplication?

STEP 2: CREATE A PARTNERSHIP SNAPSHOT

	Partnership Benefits									
Current Partners	*Share funding, materials, space, staff, etc.*	*Share access to people you want to reach*	*Share info. re: programs or services*	*Share info re: funding*	*Collaborate for funding*	*Help promote events*	*Provide connections to other organizations*	*Other Benefit: Program Evaluation*	*Other Benefit: Nutrition Classes / Education*	*Type of Organization*
Family Shelter, Inc.	☑	☑	☑	☆	☆	☆				Homeless Services Focus
State Department of Children		☑	☆		☑	☆		☑		Family Services Focus
City Community Health Centers	☆	☑			☆	☆			☆	Health Care Focus
Metropolitan Food Bank										Nutrition Focus
Local University Department of Nutrition								☆	☆	Nutrition Focus

Key: ☑ = **current partnership benefit**
☆ = **potential partnership benefit**

Step 3C: No current benefits are noted, however, several potential benefits are. The action plan might focus on how to nurture potential opportunities through this partner.

Step 3C: No current or potential benefits are noted for this partner. Is this partnership relevant to the goal? If 'yes', how might this organization be engaged as more of a strategic partner? Could they be used to provide benefits (columns) that are not currently as well supported?

Step 3C. Multiple current benefits noted for this partner. May indicate a partner that is both active and strong in helping to achieve the identified goal.

ASSESSING AND MAXIMIZING YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS (AMP) TOOL
Example (page 2)

STEP 3: ANALYZE YOUR PARTNERSHIP SNAPSHOT
Analysis Notes:
- *Overall snapshot shows a fair amount of current partnership benefits, many areas for growth, and some gaps related to achieving the specified goal.*
- *Current partnerships seem to be strongly fulfilling the benefit of 'sharing access to people you want to reach'.*
- *'Help promote events' appears to be a benefit area with little current support from partners but significant potential. How might potential efforts be supported?*
- *No partners were identified as currently or potentially 'providing connections to other organizations'. Is this benefit important to the goal? If 'yes', can it be achieved through current partners? Or should new partners be identified who can provide this benefit?*
- *Multiple current benefits are noted for Family Shelter, Inc. This may indicate a partner that is both active and strong in helping to achieve the identified goal.*
- *No current benefits are noted for Local University Department of Nutrition, however, several potential benefits are. The action plan might focus on how to nurture potential opportunities through this partner.*
- *No current or potential benefits are noted for Metropolitan Food Bank. Although they are listed as a current partner, is their collaboration related to other activities? Is this partnership relevant to the goal? If 'yes', how might this organization be engaged as more of a strategic partner? Could they be used to provide benefits that are not currently well supported?*
- *It appears that there is some diversity related to partner organizations' focus areas. Is this the level of diversity needed to achieve the goal? Who is missing? Is there overlap or duplication?*

STEP 4: DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS GAPS AND STRENGTHEN IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIPS
Action Plan:
1. *Develop a strategy for increasing events promotion that utilizes potential collaboration opportunities with Family Shelter, Inc., the State Department of Children, and City Community Health Center.*

2. *Continue to invest in maintaining a strong relationship with Family Shelter, Inc. This may include the continuation of regular meetings, joint programming, and sustaining opportunities for information and resource sharing.*

3. *Improve relationship with Local University Department of Nutrition to get assistance with program evaluation and developing nutrition classes. This may include tapping into existing relationships with Local University staff, initiating or participating in a Community-Based Research Project, etc.*

4. *Begin establishing a new relationship with a family-services focused community-based organization. Currently, the only family-services focused partner organization is a state agency, The new partner would be a smaller non-profit organization.*